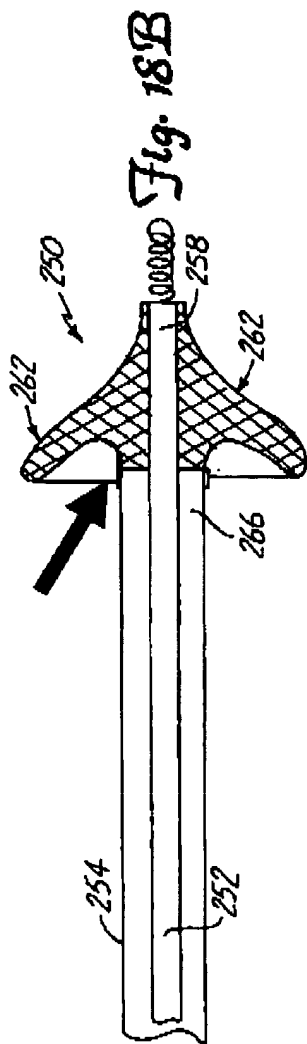


Remarks

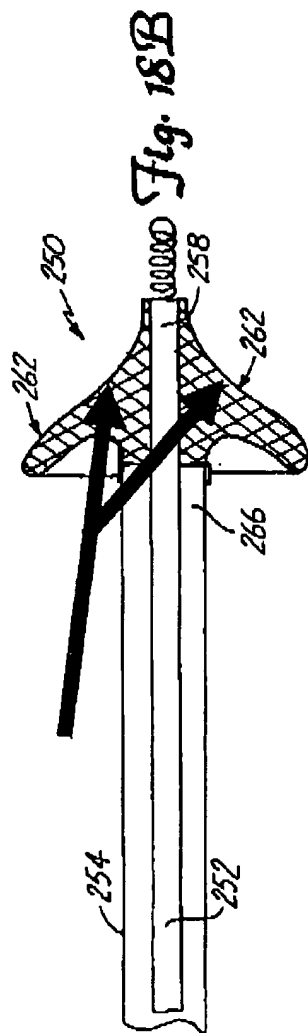
Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed on October 31, 2005. Applicants respectfully traverse all objections, rejections, and assertions made by the Examiner. Claims 32-35, 37, and 39-51 remain pending.

Claims 32-35, 37, and 39-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Daniel et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,814,064. As described in the reply filed August 11, 2005, claim 32 recites that the filtering region is uninterrupted. In the response to arguments section, the Examiner indicated that Applicants' main arguments are directed toward the limitation of a single layer filter. The Examiner then asserted that Daniel et al. teach that the mesh is composed of a single membrane (pointing to column 3, lines 35-42 of Daniel et al. in support) and that Daniel et al. anticipates claim 32. Regardless of whether or not Daniel et al. disclose a single membrane filtering mesh, the distinguishing point of claim 32 is the recitation of an uninterrupted filtering region. The "interruption" shown in Daniel et al. is not created by a multi-layer filter mesh but rather the arrangement of the filter mesh in such a way that multiple, interrupted filtering regions are created.

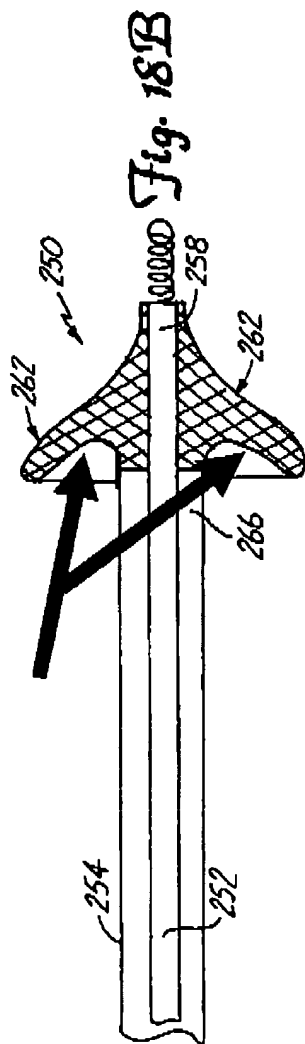
Turning now to Figure 18B of Daniel et al., here it can be see that the filter mesh is attached to outer tube 254. Figure 18B of Daniel et al. is inserted below, and the attachment point is marked with an arrow.



This attachment of the filter mesh to outer tube 254 creates a pair of filtering sections. The first or "main" filtering section is defined on the distal surface of the filter mesh, which is marked below.



The second filtration layer or section is formed by the attachment of the filter mesh to the outer tube 254. This "interruption layer" is marked below.



Thus, in order for debris to be collected on the main filtering section, debris must first travel through the "interrupted layer" and then travel through the filter to where it can

collect on the main filtering section. By virtue of the fact that the main filtering section and the second section of separated from one another, the second or interrupted layer of the filtering zone "interrupts" the main filtering section and prevents debris from immediately gaining access to main filtering section. Put another way, the Daniel et al. filter can be more easily understood as an interrupted two-pass, or interrupted two-layer filter. It should be noted that this interruption is not created by multiple layers of the Daniel et al. filter mesh, but rather the arrangement of the filter mesh relative to the outer tube 254.

Based on the forgoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that Daniel et al. does not appear to disclose an uninterrupted filtering region as recited in claim 32. Based on this difference, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 32 is patentable over Daniel et al. Because claims 33-35, 37, and 39-49 depend from claim 32, they are also allowable based on these remarks and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Claims 50 and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Daniel et al. in view of Gray et al. in U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0045916. As described above, claim 32 is believed to be distinguishable from Daniel et al. Gray et al. does not appear to correct this deficiency. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 32 is patentable over the combination of Daniel et al. and Gray et al. Because claims 50-51 depend from claim 32, they are also allowable for the same reasons and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Reexamination and reconsideration are requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of

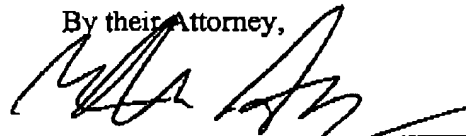
Allowance in due course is also respectfully requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS E. BROOME ET AL.

By their Attorney,

Date: Jan 3, 2006



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